

Shingles

(Herpes Zoster)

Clinical Description:

Herpes zoster (shingles) is the latent manifestation of the primary varicella infection (chickenpox) caused by the varicella zoster virus. Shingles is characterized as a rash on one side or both sides of the face or body, usually in patches along nerve pathways, or dermatomes, in crops similar to varicella lesions. The symptoms of shingles include pain, itching, or tingling in the area where the rash develops prior to blistering, and possible severe pain in the rash location even after the rash resolves. The rash usually clears within 2 - 4 weeks. Although uncommon, shingles can occur in school age children and vaccinated persons with a history of varicella disease.

Incubation Period:

Shingles is reactivation of latent varicella zoster virus, so there is no applicable incubation period. Anyone who has recovered from varicella may develop shingles.

Mode of Transmission:

Transmission of varicella zoster virus can occur through direct contact with the rash or fluid from a shingles lesion. An exposed, susceptible individual may contract chickenpox (varicella) from a shingles lesion, however, shingles itself cannot be contracted from another individual since it is reactivation of latent varicella zoster virus.

Period of Communicability:

A person can no longer spread the herpes zoster virus once the rash lesions crust.

Exclusion/Reporting:

If the site of the infection can be covered, individuals with shingles are not considered to be highly contagious and should not be excluded from school.

Prevention/Care:

- People with shingles should keep the rash covered and not touch or scratch the rash.
- Wash hands properly and often.
- No shingles vaccine is available for children; however, administration of varicella vaccine will prevent infection if contact with a shingles case occurs.
- Zoster vaccine is recommended for use in persons ages 60 years and older.

Outbreaks:

According to the ISDH Communicable Disease Reporting Rule (410 IAC 1-2.3) the definition of an outbreak means cases of disease occurring in a community, region, or particular population at a rate in excess of that which is normally expected. The local health department should be notified of suspected and/or documented cases of Shingles if the number of cases is in excess of what is normally experienced in your school or occur with a common connection (same class, sports team, etc.). For additional information and recommendations regarding the

preparation for, and the management of an outbreak situation in a school setting, see Appendix A, “Managing an Infectious Disease Outbreak In a School Setting.”

Since shingles is not transmissible from person to person, there are no outbreak control recommendations. However, if a case of shingles transmits chickenpox to a susceptible person, please refer to the varicella chapter for details on outbreak control if there is subsequent transmission of chickenpox.

Other Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) information about shingles:

<http://www.in.gov/isdh/healthinfo/shingles.htm>

Indiana State Department of Health Quick Facts Page (found on disease/condition page):

<http://bit.ly/12IJLfd>